



## AFFORDABLE CARE ACT MASSACHUSETTS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

February 3, 2011

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These Updates, published by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) in consultation with the other state agencies involved in ACA implementation, will bring you news related to the implementation of provisions of the ACA here in Massachusetts.

### Grants

The ACA provides funding opportunities to transform how health care is delivered, expand access to care and support healthcare workforce training.

### Grant Announcements

**Nurse Faculty Loan Program** **Nurse Faculty Loan Program**, under §5311 of the ACA. Announced 1/26/2011. Application due 2/25/2011. Funding to schools of nursing to support the establishment and operation of a distinct, interest-bearing loan fund in order to increase the number of qualified nursing faculty. Participating schools of nursing will make loans from the fund to assist registered nurses in completing their graduate education to become qualified nurse faculty. Program offers partial loan forgiveness for borrowers that graduate and serve as full-time nursing faculty for a prescribed period of time. Eligible entities include accredited collegiate schools of nursing. Average award is \$250,000; 98 awards. The announcement can be viewed at: [HRSA Grants](#).

**Scholarships for Health Professions Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds**, under §5401 of the ACA. Announced 1/26/2011. Application due 2/28/2011. Grants promote diversity among health profession students and practitioners through programs that award scholarships to full-time students with financial need from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolled in health professions and nursing programs. Eligible applicants are accredited schools of medicine and other specialties, programs that train physician assistants and faith-based, tribal or community-based organizations. Applicants must also be carrying out a program to recruit and retain students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. Approx. \$46 million in FY 11 to fund 350 grants and 650 programs. The announcement can be viewed at: [HRSA Grants](#).

## Applications Pending

**1/28/11 EOHHS submitted a proposal to CMS** under §2602 of the ACA, **State Demonstrations to Integrate Care for Dual Eligible Individuals**. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) is partnering with the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office (FCHCO) to evaluate models that: 1) fully integrate care for dual eligible individuals, 2) provide the management of all funds with respect to such individuals, and 3) develop models that allow states to test and evaluate systems of all-payer payment reform for the medical care of residents of the state. §3021 of the ACA provides a framework that allows CMMI to design and evaluate such models pertaining to dual eligible individuals. In the initial phase, CMS may award up to 15 state program design contracts up to \$1 million each. States that successfully complete the program design contract will be eligible to proceed to the implementation phase. Solicitation is restricted to state Medicaid programs only. For additional information on the demonstration opportunity: [FBO.Gov](http://FBO.Gov)

The Request for Proposals can be viewed at: [FBO.Gov](http://FBO.Gov)

## Guidance

**2/2/11** HHS published a proposed rule regarding **planning and establishment** of the **Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan Program** (CO-OP), §1322 of the ACA. The request for comments is asking what standards applicants should be required to meet to qualify for loans and grants under a \$6 billion program to establish health care co-ops under the ACA. The program will focus on plans with a strong consumer focus. Comments are due 3/4/11. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-2254.pdf>

**1/27/11** HHS announced the **second public meeting** to be held on 2/7/11 of the **Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP) Advisory Board**, an OCIIO advisory committee established under §1322 of the ACA. Additional information can be found in the Federal Register notice or on OCIIO's website at: [HHS.Gov](http://HHS.Gov). The link to the Federal Register containing registration deadlines and additional information: [GPO.Gov](http://GPO.Gov)

Note that the guidance listed in this section dates back to January 26, 2011. Prior guidance can be viewed at [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

## News

**2/1/11 CMS Administrator Berwick** joined policy experts and providers to discuss "**Achieving Care at Lower Costs through Accountable Care Organizations**" for an event at the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform. Nancy-Ann DeParle, former head of the White House Office of Health Reform, was slated to be a speaker, but was unable to join at the last minute due to matters related to her new position as deputy chief of staff. Read about the event, watch videos, and read excerpts from the day: [brookings.edu](http://brookings.edu) Read Berwick's comments here: [brookings.edu](http://brookings.edu)

**2/1/11 Steve Larsen** was named **director of the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight** (formerly OCIIO). Larsen led the work of the office in drafting ACA-related regulations to set minimum loss ratios and to review rates charged by insurance companies. Larsen succeeds Jay Angoff, who headed the office before it was recently transferred to the CMS. Angoff is currently at HHS as a senior advisor to the Secretary. Larsen

had been serving as the director of the Office of Oversight under Angoff. Larsen's previous career includes six years as Maryland insurance commissioner.

**1/28/11** HHS Secretary Sebelius released a **new report illustrating how much money families and businesses can save** on health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs under the ACA in 2014. Each year, a low-income family of four could save up to \$14,900 and businesses will benefit from the savings and tax credits in the new law. The report also finds that the ACA will deliver premiums 14 to 20% lower for some individuals than if the law had not been enacted and points to "preliminary evidence" that provisions of the ACA already in place will contribute to rate increases in 2011 that are lower than in previous years. Read the report at: [HHS.Gov](http://HHS.Gov) Read the blog post by HHS Asst. Secretary for Public Affairs: [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov)

**1/27/11** HHS Secretary **Sebelius answered questions** about health care reform issues during a live **online Q&A roundtable**. The Secretary fielded questions about issues that the President discussed in his 1/25/11 State of the Union Address. Watch the video at: [Whitehouse.Gov](http://Whitehouse.Gov). You can also read some of the Q&A at: [Whitehouse.Gov](http://Whitehouse.Gov).

**1/27/11** Treasury Secretary **Timothy Geithner sent a letter** to a number of small business trade organizations to ask for their help in getting the word out about the new **Small Business Health Care Tax Credit** created by the ACA. Secretary Geithner's letter included an informative pamphlet about increased coverage and health exchanges for the organizations to send to their members to help them make the most of the new tax credit this filing season. Read the letter at: [Treasury.Gov](http://Treasury.Gov) Read the pamphlet at: [Treasury.Gov](http://Treasury.Gov)

**1/27/11** HHS has granted 500 additional **waivers to organizations that cannot fulfill the ACA's requirement for annual coverage limits**, bringing a total to date of 733 waivers that have been granted. To date, the number of enrollees in plans with annual limits waivers is 2.1 million, representing about 1% of all Americans who currently have private health insurance. The waivers have been granted to **"mini-med" plans** that offer limited health coverage to employees. The waivers are intended to keep the insurance market stable until new state-run insurance exchanges become operational in 2014. Read the blog entry on waivers by Steve Larsen, Director of Oversight at OCIO at: [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov) Read more about waivers at OCIO's website: [HHS.Gov](http://HHS.Gov)

**1/26/11** President Obama nominated several members to the **Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health**. The group was established under the health reform law and will provide assistance to the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council. The appointees include: **Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.**, Valerie Brown, Jonathan Fielding, Ned Helms, Jr., Charlotte Kerr, Jeffrey Levi, Elizabeth Mayer-Davis, Vivek Murthy, Barbara Otto, Linda Rosenstock, John Seffrin, Susan Swider and Sharon Van Horn. For a full list of Presidential appointments please read the White House press release at: [Whitehouse.Gov](http://Whitehouse.Gov). The group, established in July 2010, provides recommendations to the National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council, established under §4001 of the ACA, on lifestyle-based chronic disease prevention and management, integrative health care practices and health promotion. To read more about the Council visit: [Healthcare.gov](http://Healthcare.gov)

**1/26/11** President Barack Obama also **officially re-nominated Donald Berwick to be CMS administrator**. Berwick was originally nominated in April 2010 and ultimately skipped the nomination process altogether when the president used a recess appointment. His nomination was praised by Democrats and many health policy advocates and experts, but several GOP lawmakers opposed his nomination over his previous statements praising the British health care system. His re-nomination yesterday was immediately criticized by Sen. Orrin

Hatch (R-UT), the top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee. Hatch stated that Republicans will expect a full hearing to "understand how the Administration is implementing the \$2.6 trillion health law, its impact on the American people, and the consequences to future of Medicare and Medicaid." Read about the Presidential Nominations sent to the Senate, including Donald Berwick at: [Whitehouse.Gov](http://Whitehouse.Gov)

## EOHHS News

**1/26/11** The **state national health reform website continues to be revised** and features consumer-friendly updates and improved navigation. Among the changes, the grants section includes new information about grants the Commonwealth has received as well as new ACA-related grant announcements from the federal government. You can also read previous ACA Implementation Updates. And be sure to visit the site to keep up with stakeholder meetings and materials. Be sure to check out the changes at our website and add our website to your favorites: [mass.gov/national health reform](http://mass.gov/national_health_reform)

## Upcoming Events

### **Next Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting**

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Implementation meeting  
Wednesday March 2, 2011 from 3:00-4:00 P.M.  
1 Ashburton Place, 21<sup>st</sup> floor, Boston